PRAGUE PROCESS
ПРАЖСКИЙ ПРОЦЕСС



Liechtenstein

General Information

Population

41 024 (World Bank 2025)

40 886 (STAT LI 2024)

Immigration

27 669 (UN DESA Stock 2024)

716 (STAT LI 2023)

Emigration

346 (UN DESA Stock 2024)

460 (STAT LI 2023)

Working-age population

26 419 (World Bank 2025)

20 786 (STAT LI 2023)

Unemployment rate

1.4 % (STAT LI 2023)

GDP

7 044 900 000 current prices CHF (STAT LI 2022)

Refugees, Asylum seekers, IDPs

Refugees

987 (UNHCR 2025)

Asylum Seekers

37 (UNHCR 2025)

89 (STAT LI 2024)

IDPs

0 (UNHCR 2025)

Citizenship

By Birth

No (GLOBALCIT 2024)

By Descent

Yes (GLOBALCIT 2024)

Years of Residency

10 years of residence required (GLOBALCIT 2024)

Territory

160 km^2 (CIA World Factbook)

Data from international sources is updated automatically as it becomes available.

Migration Authorities

Responsible Body

Ministry of Home Affairs, Economy and Sports

Line Ministries

Ministry of Social Affairs and Justice

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Environment and Culture

Agencies

Migration and Passport Office

Office of Statistics

Office for Foreign Affairs

Office of Justice

Key Policy Documents

Ordinance on temporary protection for certain categories of persons from Ukraine (Ukraine Protection Ordinance), 2022

Asylum Act (AsylG), 2012

Asylum Ordinance (AsylV), 2012

Regulation about entry and visa issuance (2011)

Law on the freedom of movement for EEA and Swiss nationals (2009)

Law on Foreigners (2008)

Regulation on the integration of foreigners (2008)

Regulation on the execution of coercive measures under immigration law (2008)

Relevant Publications

Exploring the Potential of Digitalisation in Migration Management in the Prague Process Region

Digitalisation and labour migration: the use of modern technology, challenges and opportunities

How will migration to Europe look in the Future?

Intra-corporate Transferees (ICTs): The benefits for the EU and the opportunity cost

Prague Process Handbook on Concluding Readmission Agreements and Organising Returns

Liechtenstein is one of the smallest countries in Europe. In 2024, its population reached 40,886, with Liechtenstein citizens accounting for about two-thirds (26,518). Foreign nationals numbered 14,368, mainly Swiss (27%), Austrians (16.6%), Germans (13.5%), and Italians (8.4%), while all other nationalities each represented less than 5%. Population growth in 2024 was driven almost entirely by migration: natural increase added just 39 people, compared with net migration of 832, resulting in a 2.2% population rise from 2023. Net migration has remained positive over the past decade and peaked in 2024, partly due to a revised population definition that expanded the recorded resident population.

According to UN DESA, Liechtenstein hosted 27,669 immigrants in 2024, up from 25,877 in 2020. Swiss nationals formed by far the largest group (15,441), followed by Austrians (4,260) and Germans (2,044). Among non-EU nationals, the most represented were citizens of Türkiye (621), Bosnia and Herzegovina (320) and Brazil (215).

Residence in Liechtenstein is tightly regulated: all stays beyond tourism require a permit. While EEA citizens may reside in the country, this right is subject to strict annual quotas under a bilateral agreement – 72 permits for EEA nationals and 17 for Swiss citizens each year. Half of EEA permits are allocated by lottery and half by government decision. Nationals of countries without bilateral agreements have no automatic right to residence, though permits may be granted on an exceptional basis for employment or other cases deemed to be in Liechtenstein's interest.

Liechtenstein's labour market is characterised by very low unemployment and a long-standing dependence on foreign labour. Sustained economic growth, a small domestic workforce, and specialisation in industries such as engineering and financial services have made foreign workers indispensable. At the end of 2024, Liechtenstein employed 43,411 people. Foreign nationals dominated employment in industry, accounting for around 81% of the workforce, mainly EEA citizens (56%), followed by Swiss nationals (18.8%) and third-country nationals (6.1%). The services sector also relied heavily on foreign labour, with 67% of workers holding foreign nationality, primarily from the EEA (38.9%) and Switzerland (24.5%). Agriculture remains the sector with the highest concentration of Liechtenstein citizens.

Cross-border commuters now significantly outnumber resident employees, especially in higher-skilled occupations. As of 31 December 2024, Liechtenstein employed 24,943 cross-border commuters, accounting for 57.4% of total employment – an increase of 1.2% (+302 persons) compared with 2023. Most commuters originated from Switzerland (61.2%) and Austria (34.6%), with smaller shares from Germany (2.7%) and other countries (1.6%). In full-time equivalent terms, commuters were most concentrated in industry (68.0%), followed by services (53.3%) and agriculture (12.4%). This exceptionally high reliance on cross-border labour reflects Liechtenstein's restrictive residence regime, which limits the ability of foreign workers to reside in the country even when employed by local firms.

In 2024, Liechtenstein recorded 1,300 immigrants, of whom 1,109 were foreign nationals granted residence permits. Nearly half were Ukrainians (46%), followed by Germans (12.7%), Swiss (10.8%), and Austrians (8.4%). The elevated inflow largely reflects persons granted temporary protection (permit S) in previous years who were reclassified as permanent residents following a statistical definition change. Among 1,109 residence permit holders, family reunification was the main admission ground (32%), while employment accounted for 10%; a further 48% entered under other grounds. Around 516 permit holders were employed, mainly in financial and insurance services, education, business services, agriculture and forestry, and healthcare.

Student mobility also contributes to migration dynamics. In the 2023/2024 academic year, 758 students studied in Liechtenstein, predominantly from Austria (35%), Germany (25.7%), and Switzerland (19.7%), with Austrian nationals consistently forming the largest group.

Irregular migration in Liechtenstein is inconsiderable. The public infrastructure, social structures, the existence of a well-regulated labour market along with the geographical position of Liechtenstein and strict border controls discourage irregular migration. In 2024, only 5 non-EU nationals were found to be illegally present in Liechtenstein, representing a 93% decrease compared to 2020, when 70 were recorded. Reflecting this trend, number of return orders has declined since 2021 and none were issued in 2024. The last returns following an order to leave took place in 2022 when 10 persons left Liechtenstein.

Similar to irregular migration, human trafficking is not considered a major concern in Liechtenstein, though individual cases have been detected. Between 2018 and 2023, the National Police identified 9 alleged victims, mainly for labour and sexual exploitation, all foreign nationals[DS1] [TS2] (four from Brazil, four from Thailand and one from North Macedonia). None were formally recognised as victims after investigations. Groups at risk include foreign nightclub dancers, agricultural trainees, live-in domestic workers, and asylum seekers, including unaccompanied minors.

In 2024, 407 applications for international protection were registered in Liechtenstein, including 318 for temporary protection and 89 for asylum. After a 33% decline between 2022 and 2023 (from 584 to 392), applications rose slightly in 2024 but remained around 30% below the 2022 level. Ukrainian nationals accounted for almost all protection requests (99.7%).

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Liechtenstein activated a temporary protection status (Status S), aligned with the EU Temporary Protection Directive and bypassing the regular asylum procedure. As of 10 December 2025, 1,377 applications had been submitted under this framework. Currently, 862 Ukrainians reside in Liechtenstein, of whom 840 hold valid Status S. Given the high number of Ukrainian refugees relative to its population size, Parliament approved funding in December 2024 for a new collective accommodation centre with 70 places, expected to open in 2025[IL3] .

Emigration from Liechtenstein remains limited but diversified. According to UN DESA, 346 Liechtenstein citizens lived abroad in 2024, up from 314 in 2020, with Portugal hosting the largest share (259). In 2024, total emigration reached 467 persons, of whom 44.3% were Liechtenstein citizens, followed by EEA nationals (26.6%) and Swiss citizens (6.4%). Most emigrants moved to Switzerland (39.8%) or other EEA countries, notably Austria (13.3%) and Germany (7.3%), while smaller shares relocated to Portugal, Italy, the Americas (11.8%), and Asia (7.7%). Of the 225 employed persons who emigrated in 2024 under a residence permit, 55% works in the services sector, 37% in industry, and 8% in agriculture. Mobility is also pronounced in education: in the 2023/2024 academic year, 1,202 Liechtenstein students studied abroad, mainly in Switzerland (71.6%), Austria (15.5%), and Germany (4.7%).

Migration governance in Liechtenstein is shaped by a concise legal framework regulating asylum, residence, and the status of foreign nationals, notably the Asylum Act (2012), the Foreigners Act (2008), and the Act on the Freedom of Movement for EEA/Swiss Nationals (2009). The system combines strict controls for third-country nationals with facilitated mobility for EEA and Swiss citizens, while gradually strengthening integration measures and procedural efficiency. Integration policy is guided by the 2021 Integration Strategy, building on the long-term concept “Liechtenstein – Strength through Diversity”.

In 2024, together with Switzerland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo*, Liechtenstein has signed a Memorandum of Understanding on migration partnerships aimed at improving migration management. Since 2023, Liechtenstein and Switzerland have jointly implemented development projects focusing on border management and combating migrant smuggling, preventing irregular migration, supporting reintegration of returnees, and strengthening regional cooperation in the Western Balkans.

Although not an EU Member State, Liechtenstein is bound to implement the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum under its Schengen and Dublin obligations. In October 2025, the government confirmed its intention to transpose the relevant elements of the Pact into national law, while participating voluntarily in solidarity measures.

Liechtenstein is not a signatory to the Global Compact for Migration but remains active in international and regional fora, including the OSCE, UN, Council of Europe, the Prague Process, and the Budapest Process. In 2025, the country marked 30 years of membership in the European Economic Area.

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